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Where Love Is, There God Is Also

L. N. Tolstoï

Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York

WHERE LOVE IS

THERE GOD IS ALSO

BY

COUNT LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

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WHERE LOVE IS, THERE GOD IS ALSO.

1885.

In the city lived Martuin Avdyéitch, a shoemaker. He lived in a basement, in a little room with one window. The window looked out on the street. Through the window he used to watch the people passing by: although only their feet could be seen, yet by the boots Martuin Avdyéitch recognized their owners. Martuin Avdyéitch had lived long in one place, and had many acquaintances. Few pairs of boots in his district had not been in his hands once and again. Some he would half-sole, some he would patch, some he would stitch around, and occasionally he would also put on new uppers. And through the window he quite often recognized his work. Avdyéitch had plenty to do, because he was a faithful workman, used good material, did not make exorbitant charges, and kept his word. If he can finish an order by a certain time, he accepts it: if not, he will not deceive you, — he tells you so beforehand. And all knew Avdyéitch, and he was never out of work.

Avdyéitch had always been a good man; but as he grew old, he began to think more about his soul, and get nearer to God. Martuin's wife had died when he was still living with his master. His wife left him a boy three years old. None of their other children had

M97484

lived. All the eldest had died in childhood. Martuin at first intended to send his little son to his sister in the village, but afterwards he felt sorry for him: he thought to himself, "It will be hard for my Kapitoshka to live in a strange family. I shall keep him with me."

And Avdyéitch left his master, and went into lodgings with his little son. But, through God's will, Avdyéitch had no luck with children. As Kapitoshka grew older, he began to help his father, and would have been a delight to him, but fell sick, went to bed, suffered a week, and died. Martuin buried his son, and fell into despair. So deep was this despair, that he began to complain of God. Martuin fell into such a melancholy state, that more than once he prayed to God for death, and reproached God because he did not take away him who was an old man, instead of his beloved only son. Avdyéitch also ceased to go to church.

And once a little old man, a fellow-countryman, came from Troïtsa (Trinity) to see Avdyéitch: for seven years he had been absent. Avdyéitch talked with him, and began to complain about his sorrows.

"I have no more desire to live," he said: "I only wish I was dead. That is all I pray God for. I am a man without any thing to hope for now."

And the little old man said to him, —

"You don't talk right, Martuin: we must not judge God's doings. The world moves, not by your skill, but by God's will. God decreed for your son to die,— for you — to live. Consequently, it is for the best. And you are in despair, because you wish to live for your own happiness."

"But what shall one live for?" asked Martuin.

And the little old man said, "We must live for God, Martuin. He gives you life, and for his sake you

must live. When you begin to live for him, you will not grieve over any thing, and all will seem easy to you."

Martuin kept silent for a moment, and then says, "But how can one live for the sake of God?"

And the little old man said, "Christ has taught us how to live for God. You know how to read? Buy a Testament, and read it: there you will learn how to live for God. Every thing is explained there."

And these words kindled a fire in Avdyéitch's heart. And he went that very same day, bought a New Testament in large print, and began to read. At first Avdyéitch intended to read only on holidays; but as he began to read, it so cheered his soul that he used to read every day. At times he would become so absorbed in reading, that all the kerosene in the lamp would burn out, and still he could not tear himself away. And so Avdyéitch used to read every evening. And the more he read, the clearer he understood what God wanted of him, and how one should live for God; and his heart constantly grew easier and easier. Formerly, when he lay down to sleep, he used to sigh and groan, and always think of his Kapitoshka; and now he only exclaimed, "Glory to thee! glory to thee, Lord! Thy will be done."

And from that time Avdyéitch's whole life was changed. In other days he, too, used to drop into a saloon, as a holiday amusement, to drink a cup of tea; and he was not averse to a little brandy either. He would take a drink with some acquaintance, and leave the saloon, not intoxicated exactly, yet in a happy frame of mind, and inclined to talk nonsense, and shout, and use abusive language at a person. Now he left off this sort of thing. His life became quiet

and joyful. In the morning he sits down to work, finishes his allotted task, then takes the little lamp from the hook, puts it on the table, gets his book from the shelf, opens it, and sits down to read. And the more he reads, the more he understands, and the brighter and happier it is in his heart.

Once it happened that Martuin read till late into the night. He was reading the Gospel of Luke. He was reading over the sixth chapter; and he was reading the verses, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." He read further also those verses, where God speaks: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

Avdyéitch read these words, and joy filled his soul. He took off his spectacles, put them down on the book, leaned his elbows upon the table, and became lost in thought. And he began to measure his life by these words. And he thought to himself, —

"Is my house built upon the rock, or upon the sand?

'Tis well if on the rock. It is so easy when you are alone by yourself; it seems as if you had done every thing as God commands: but when you forget yourself, you sin again. Yet I shall still struggle on. It is very good. Help me, Lord!"

Thus ran his thoughts: he wanted to go to bed, but he felt loath to tear himself away from the book. And he began to read further in the seventh chapter. He read about the centurion, he read about the widow's son, he read about the answer given to John's disciples, and finally he came to that place where the rich Pharisee desired the Lord to sit at meat with him; and he read how the woman that was a sinner anointed his feet, and washed them with her tears, and how he forgave her. He reached the forty-fourth verse, and began to read, —

"And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." He finished reading these verses, and thought to himself, "*Thou gavest me no water for my feet, thou gavest me no kiss. My head with oil thou didst not anoint.*"

And again Avdyéitch took off his spectacles, put them down upon the book, and again he became lost in thought.

"It seems that Pharisee must have been such a man as I am. I, too, apparently have thought only of myself, — how I might have my tea, be warm and

comfortable, but never to think about my guest. He thought about himself, but there was not the least care taken of the guest. And who was his guest? The Lord himself. If he had come to me, should I have done the same way?"

Avdyéitch rested his head upon both his arms, and did not notice how he fell asleep.

"Martuin!" suddenly seemed to sound in his ears.

Martuin started from his sleep: "Who is here?"

He turned around, glanced toward the door — no one.

Again he fell into a doze. Suddenly he plainly hears, —

"Martuin! Ah, Martuin! look to-morrow on the street. I am coming."

Martuin awoke, rose from the chair, began to rub his eyes. He himself does not know whether he heard those words in his dream, or in reality. He turned down his lamp, and went to bed.

At daybreak next morning, Avdyéitch rose, made his prayer to God, lighted the stove, put on the *shchi*[1] and the *kasha*,[2] put the water in the samovar, put on his apron, and sat down by the window to work.

Avdyéitch is working, and at the same time thinking about all that had happened yesterday. He thinks both ways: now he thinks it was a dream, and now he thinks he really heard a voice. "Well," he thinks, "such things have been."

Martuin is sitting by the window, and does not work as much as he looks through the window: when any one passes by in boots that he does not know, he bends down, looks out of the window, in order to see, not only the feet, but also the face. The *dvornik*[3] passed by in

[1] Cabbage-soup. [2] Gruel. [3] House-porter.

new *valenki;*[1] the water-carrier passed by; then came alongside of the window an old soldier of Nicholas's time, in an old pair of laced felt boots, with a shovel in his hands. Avdyéitch recognized him by his felt boots. The old man's name was Stepánuitch; and a neighboring merchant, out of charity, gave him a home with him. He was required to assist the *dvornik.* Stepánuitch began to shovel away the snow from in front of Avdyéitch's window. Avdyéitch glanced at him, and took up his work again.

"Pshaw! I must be getting crazy in my old age," said Avdyéitch, and laughed at himself. "Stepánuitch is clearing away the snow, and I imagine that Christ is coming to see me. I was entirely out of my mind, old dotard that I am!" Avdyéitch sewed about a dozen stitches, and then felt impelled to look through the window again. He looked out again through the window, and sees Stepánuitch has leaned his shovel against the wall, and is either warming himself, or resting. He is an old, broken-down man: evidently he has not strength enough, even to shovel the snow. Avdyéitch said to himself, "I will give him some tea: by the way, the samovar must be boiling by this time." Avdyéitch laid down his awl, rose from his seat, put the samovar on the table, made the tea, and tapped with his finger at the glass. Stepánuitch turned around, and came to the window. Avdyéitch beckoned to him, and went to open the door.

"Come in, warm yourself a little," he said. "You must be cold."

"May Christ reward you for this! my bones ache," said Stepánuitch.

Stepánuitch came in, and shook off the snow, tried

[1] Felt boots.

to wipe his feet, so as not to soil the floor, but staggered.

"Don't trouble to wipe your feet. I will clean it up myself: we are used to such things. Come in and sit down," said Avdyéitch. "Drink a cup of tea."

And Avdyéitch filled two glasses, and handed one to his guest; while he himself poured his tea into a saucer, and began to blow it.

Stepánuitch finished drinking his glass of tea, turned the glass upside down,[1] put upon it the half-eaten lump of sugar, and began to express his thanks. But it was evident he wanted some more.

"Have some more," said Avdyéitch, filling both his own glass and his guest's. Avdyéitch drinks his tea, but from time to time keeps glancing out into the street.

"Are you expecting any one?" asked his guest.

"Am I expecting any one? I am ashamed even to tell whom I expect. I am, and I am not, expecting some one; but one word has impressed itself upon my heart. Whether it is a dream, or something else, I do not know. Don't you see, brother, I was reading yesterday the gospel about Christ, the *Bátiushka*;[2] how he suffered, how he walked on the earth. I suppose you have heard about it?"

"Indeed I have," replied Stepánuitch: "but we are people in darkness; we can't read."

"Well, now, I was reading about that very thing,—how he walked upon the earth: I read, you know, how he comes to the Pharisee, and the Pharisee did not treat him hospitably. Well, and so, my brother, I was reading, yesterday, about this very thing, and was thinking to myself how he did not receive Christ, the

[1] A custom among the Russians. [2] Little father.

Bátiushka, with honor. If, for example, he should come to me, or any one else, I think to myself, I should not even know how to receive him. And he gave him no reception at all. Well! while I was thus thinking, I fell asleep, brother, and I hear some one call me by name. I got up: the voice, just as though some one whispered, says, 'Be on the watch: I shall come to-morrow.' And this happened twice. Well! would you believe it, it got into my head? I scold myself — and yet I am expecting him, the Bátiushka."

Stepánuitch shook his head, and said nothing: he finished drinking his glass of tea, and put it on the side; but Avdyéitch picked up the glass again, and filled it once more.

"Drink some more for your good health. You see, I have an idea, that, when the Bátiushka went about on this earth, he disdained no one, and had more to do with the simple people. He always went to see the simple people. He picked out his disciples more from among our brethren, sinners like ourselves from the working-class. He, says he, who exalts himself, shall be humbled, and he who is humbled shall become exalted. You, says he, call me Lord, and I, says he, wash your feet. Whoever wishes, says he, to be the first, the same shall be a servant to all. Because, says he, blessed are the poor, the humble, the kind, the generous." And Stepánuitch forgot about his tea: he was an old man, and easily moved to tears. He is sitting listening, and the tears are rolling down his face.

"Come, now, have some more tea," said Avdyéitch; but Stepánuitch made the sign of the cross, thanked him, turned up his glass, and arose.

"Thanks to you," he says, "Martuin Avdyéitch,

for treating me kindly, and satisfying me, soul and body."

"You are welcome; come in again: always glad to see a friend," said Avdyéitch.

Stepánuitch departed; and Martuin poured out the rest of the tea, drank it up, put away the dishes, and sat down again by the window to work, to stitch on a patch. He is stitching, and at the same time looking through the window. He is expecting Christ, and is all the while thinking of him and his deeds, and his head is filled with the different speeches of Christ.

Two soldiers passed by: one wore boots furnished by the Crown, and the other one, boots that he had made; then the master[1] of the next house, passed by in shining galoshes; then a baker with a basket passed by. All passed by; and now there came also by the window a woman in woollen stockings and wooden shoes. She passed by the window, and stood still near the window-case.

Avdyéitch looked up at her from the window, sees it is a strange woman poorly clad, and with a child: she was standing by the wall with her back to the wind, trying to wrap up the child, and she has nothing to wrap it up in. The woman was dressed in shabby summer clothes: and from behind the frame, Avdyéitch hears the child crying, and the woman trying to pacify it; but she is not able to pacify it. Avdyéitch got up, went to the door, ascended the steps, and cried, "Hey! my good woman!"[2] The woman heard him and turned around.

"Why are you standing in the cold with the child? Come into my room, where it is warm: you can manage it better. Right in this way!"

[1] *Khozyáin.* [2] Umnitsa ah!

The woman was astonished. She sees an old, old man in an apron, with spectacles on his nose, calling her to him. She followed him. They descended the steps, entered the room: the old man led the woman to his bed.

"There," says he, "sit down, my good woman, nearer to the stove: you can get warm, and nurse the child."

"I have no milk for him. I myself have not eaten any thing since morning," said the woman; but, nevertheless, she took the child to her breast.

Avdyéitch shook his head, went to the table, brought out the bread and a dish, opened the oven-door, poured into the dish some cabbage-soup, took out the pot with the gruel, but it was not done yet; so he filled the dish with *shchi* only, and put it on the table. He got the bread, took the towel down from the hook, and put it upon the table.

"Sit down," he says, "and eat, my good woman; and I will mind the little one. You see, I once had children of my own: I know how to handle them."

The woman crossed herself, sat down at the table, and began to eat; while Avdyéitch took a seat on the bed near the infant. Avdyéitch kept smacking and smacking to it with his lips; but it was a poor kind of smacking, for he had no teeth. The little one still cries. And it occurred to Avdyéitch to threaten the little one with his finger: he waves, waves his finger right before the child's mouth, and hastily withdraws it. He does not put it to its mouth, because his finger is black, and soiled with wax. And the little one looked at his finger, and became quiet: then it began to smile, and Avdyéitch also was glad. While the woman is eating, she tells who she is, and whither she was going.

"I," says she, "am a soldier's wife. It is now seven months since they sent my husband away off, and no tidings. I lived out as cook; the baby was born; no one cared to keep me with a child. This is the third month that I have been struggling along without a place. I ate up all I had. I wanted to engage as a wet-nurse — no one would take me — I am too thin, they say. I have just been to the merchant's wife, where lives our *bdbotchka*,[1] and so they promised to take us in. I thought this was the end of it. But she told me to come next week. And she lives a long way off. I got tired out; and it tired him, too, my heart's darling. Fortunately, our landlady takes pity on us for the sake of Christ, and gives us a room, else I don't know how I should manage to get along."

Avdyéitch sighed, and said, "Haven't you any warm clothes?"

"Now is the time, friend, to wear warm clothes; but yesterday I pawned my last shawl for a twenty-kopek piece."[2]

The woman came to the bed, and took the child; and Avdyéitch rose, went to the little wall, and succeeded in finding an old coat.

"Na!" says he: "it is a poor thing, yet you may turn it to some use."

The woman looked at the coat, looked at the old man; she took the coat, and burst into tears: and Avdyéitch turned away his head; crawling under the bed, he pushed out a little trunk, rummaged in it, and sat down again opposite the woman.

And the woman said, "May Christ bless you, *diédushka!*[3] He must have sent me himself to your

[1] Little grandmother.

[2] Dvagrivennui, silver, worth sixteen cents.

[3] Little grandfather.

window. My little child would have frozen to death. When I started out, it was warm, but now it is terribly cold. And he. Bátiushka, led you to look through the window, and take pity on me, an unfortunate."

Avdyéitch smiled, and said, "Indeed, he did that! I have been looking through the window, my good woman, not without cause." And Martuin told the soldier's wife his dream, and how he heard the voice,—how the Lord promised to come and see him that day.

"All things are possible," said the woman. She rose, put on the coat, wrapped up her little child in it; and, as she started to take leave, she thanked Avdyéitch again.

"Take this, for Christ's sake," said Avdyéitch, giving her a twenty-kopek piece: "redeem your shawl." She made the sign of the cross. Avdyéitch made the sign of the cross, and went with her to the door.

The woman left. Avdyéitch ate some shchi, washed some dishes, and sat down again to work. While he works he still remembers the window: when the window grew darker, he immediately looked out to see who was passing by. Both acquaintances and strangers passed by, and there was nothing out of the ordinary.

But here Avdyéitch sees that an old apple-woman has stopped right in front of his window. She carries a basket with apples. Only a few were left, as she had nearly sold them all out; and over her shoulder she had a bag full of chips. She must have gathered them up in some new building, and was on her way home. One could see that the bag was heavy on her shoulder: she wanted to shift it to the other shoulder. So she lowered the bag upon the sidewalk, stood the basket with the apples on a little post, and began to shake down the splinters in the bag. And while she was shaking

her bag, a little boy in a torn cap came along, picked up an apple from the basket, and was about to make his escape; but the old woman noticed it, turned around, and caught the youngster by his sleeve. The little boy began to struggle, tried to tear himself away; but the old woman grasped him with both hands, knocked off his cap, and caught him by the hair.

The little boy is screaming, the old woman is scolding. Avdyéitch lost no time in putting away his awl; he threw it upon the floor, sprang to the door, — he even stumbled on the stairs, and dropped his eye-glasses, — and rushed out into the street.

The old woman is pulling the youngster by his hair, and is scolding, and threatening to take him to the policeman: the youngster defends himself, and denies the charge. "I did not take it," he says: "what are you licking me for? let me go!" Avdyéitch tried to separate them. He took the boy by his arm, and says, —

"Let him go, bábushka; forgive him, for Christ's sake."

"I will forgive him so that he won't forget till the new broom grows. I am going to take the little villain to the police."

Avdyéitch began to entreat the old woman: —

"Let him go, bábushka," he said; "he will never do it again. Let him go, for Christ's sake."

The old woman let him loose: the boy tried to run, but Avdyéitch kept him back.

"Ask the bábushka's forgiveness," he said, "and don't you ever do it again: I saw you taking the apple."

With tears in his eyes, the boy began to ask forgiveness.

"Nu! that's right; and now, here's an apple for

you." Avdyéitch got an apple from the basket, and gave it to the boy. "I will pay you for it, bábushka," he said to the old woman.

"You ruin them that way, the good-for-nothings," said the old woman. "He ought to be treated so that he would remember it for a whole week."

"Eh, bábushka, bábushka," said Ardyéitch, "that is right according to our judgment, but not according to God's. If he is to be whipped for an apple, then what do we deserve for our sins?"

The old woman was silent.

Avdyéitch told her the parable of the khozyáin who forgave a debtor all that he owed him, and how the debtor went and began to choke one who owed him.

The old woman listened, and the boy stood listening.

"God has commanded us to forgive," said Avdyéitch, "else we, too, may not be forgiven. All should be forgiven, and the thoughtless especially."

The old woman shook her head, and sighed.

"That's so," said she; "but the trouble is, that they are very much spoiled."

"Then, we, who are older, must teach them," said Avdyéitch.

"That's just what I say," remarked the old woman. "I myself had seven of them — only one daughter is left." And the old woman began to relate where and how she lived with her daughter, and how many grandchildren she had. "Here," she says, "my strength is only so-so, and yet I have to work. I pity the youngsters — my grandchildren — how nice they are! No one gives me such a welcome as they do. Aksintka won't go to any one but me. (Bábushka, dear bábushka, loveliest") — and the old woman grew quite sentimental.

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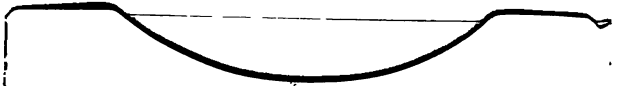

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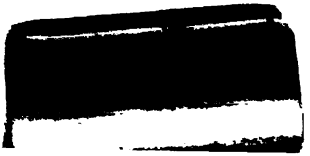
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